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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2492

Jan. 25, 1991

MEAT & POULTRY LABELING -- USDA will develop standards for mandatory nutrition labeling of meat & poultry products in the near future, says Assistant Secretary Jo Ann Smith. "We believe consumers deserve more nutrition information on the labels of all foods," Smith says. "We recognize implementing mandatory nutrition labeling on meat and poultry products will not be simple. We are committed to determining the best way ..." Contact: Jim Greene (202) 382-0314.

U.S. AGRICULTURE, in its most recent annual checkup, was found to be hale & hearty -- although with a few problems needing attention. USDA for six years has been "taking the pulse" of the Nation's ag sector, using the Farm Costs & Returns Survey. The most recent year, 1989, was financially the best, says Economist Mitch Morehart. "The survey tells us how much it costs to produce various commodities in different areas and helps us maintain a good understanding of the financial strengths and weaknesses of U.S. agriculture," Morehart says. Contact: Mitch Morehart (202) 219-0801.

NEW FLAX FOR HEALTH-CONSCIOUS -- Flax may be the next exotic "health" food. And, Omega, a new flax developed by USDA, may become "the" flax to be eating. According to Jerry Miller, the USDA plant geneticist who developed it, Omega's seeds contain omega-3, a family of fatty acids. Studies have indicated eating moderate amounts of omega-3 & avoiding high-fat diets could help reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. Omega's golden-tinted seeds are ideally suited for grinding & blending into flour. Farmers may favor Omega because it's the first yellow-seeded flax that's disease-resistant. Foods with the new Omega flax seed might reach grocery shelves within two years. Contact: Jerry F. Miller (701) 239-1321.

TAX GUIDES -- The IRS has tax guides especially helpful for farmers. This year's edition of Publication 225, "Farmer's Tax Guide," has important changes for the 1990 tax year, along with specific info on filing requirements & due dates, farm business expenses & other topics. It also has sample tax forms generally used by farmers. Publication 51, "Agricultural Employer's Tax Guide," explains farmer-employer responsibilities, such as social security tax & income tax withholding. Both pubs are free by calling: 1-800-TAX-FORM. Contact: Darlyn Robinson-Boyd (202) 535-6576.

WIND EROSION UP SLIGHTLY -- More than 1.8 million acres of Great Plains cropland & rangeland were damaged by wind erosion during November & December 1990, up slightly from the same period a year earlier. "The Great Plains continues to have fairly high wind erosion damage, due primarily to continuing drought and the resulting combination of insufficient cover and little residue," says Soil Conservation Service Chief William Richards. Contact: Ted Kupelian (202) 447-5776.

SMUGGLING FINE DOUBLED -- Beginning Jan. 27, USDA will double the fines to travelers entering the continental U.S. with undeclared ag products. Failing to declare prohibited goods will now carry a \$50 fine. Cases involving concealing or misrepresenting products may receive a \$100 fine. "Bringing foreign meat and plant products into the U.S. poses a serious threat to the health of U.S. crops and livestock," says James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA's Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service. Any attempt to smuggle meats, fruits or vegetables is a federal offense, Glosser says. Contact: Janna Evans (301) 436-7251.

ALL BUT THREE STATES -- Maryland, Montana & Nevada -- are now enrolled in the cooperative state-federal-industry program to wipe out pseudorabies, a costly disease of swine & other livestock, says James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA's Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service. Glosser says 47 states & Puerto Rico have entered the five-step eradication program. Pseudorabies, a contagious livestock disease, is most prevalent in swine, but it also affects cattle, sheep, dogs, cats & other animals. Contact: Larry Mark (202) 447-3977.

USDA LOOKING FOR SCIENTISTS -- USDA is looking for 100 scientists, who are beginning their research careers, to work on projects in food safety, global change, biological control of crop pests & genetic engineering of plants. Applicants must have a doctorate degree and should have less than four years post-doctoral experience. Pay ranges from \$31,116 to \$37,294. The scientists will work for up to two years as research associates at USDA labs across the country. Contact: Sandy Miller Hays (301) 344-4089.

POLAND STRUGGLES -- The Polish government is striving to transform the country from a centralized to a free market economy. It has taken independent steps more dramatic than those of any other Eastern European nation, says Economist Nancy Cochrane. In January 1990, for example, Poland launched a radical program in which prices were freed, subsidies eliminated & Poland's unit of currency became internally convertible into foreign currencies. The program also provided for the breakup of the socialized meat & dairy monopolies that had dominated the economy for decades. Contact: Nancy Cochrane (202) 219-0621.

HORTICULTURAL PRODUCTS UP -- U.S. exports of horticultural products to offshore destinations (other than Canada) reached a record \$377.4 million in October, the first month of fiscal year 1991. This was 15 percent above the same month in 1990. USDA experts say grapefruit, apples, pears, raisins, canned tomato paste & shelled & prepared almonds registered the sharpest increase. Contact: Mark Tompson (202) 447-6877.

STEWARDSHIP AWARD -- USDA has awarded its 1990 Stewardship Award to the watershed staff of the agency's Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit in California for accomplishments in protecting the water quality of Lake Tahoe. "The hard work of the watershed staff of the unit resulted in a cleaner and clearer Lake Tahoe -- a national treasure," says Forest Service Chief F. Dale Robertson. The watershed improvement program is considered by many to be the most aggressive and complex program of its kind in the country. Contact: Diane Hitchings (202) 475-3778.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1755 -- Burley tobacco production is a way of life that goes back generations for Kentucky farmers. On this edition of **Agriculture USA**, Maria Bynum travels to Kentucky to find out more about the crop that pays the bills for some families. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1236 -- Home-based businesses; food safety considerations; biotechnology & consumer response; meat inspection changes; nutritious snacks. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1744 -- USDA News Highlights; maximum payment acreage; 1991 pork production; 1991 citrus outlook; erosion of U.S. farm numbers easing. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1404 -- A calorie is a calorie; the myth of dieting; underwater weighing; eating to excess; high-tech calorie counting. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Mon., Feb. 4, cattle numbers; Tues., Feb. 5, weekly weather & crop outlook; Feb. 6, dairy products; Mon., Feb. 11, crop production, world ag supply & demand.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EST, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE
(Week of Jan. 24, 26 & 28, 1991)

FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on smuggling fines; Will Pemble takes a look at soybean oil substitutes; Mike Thomas, University of Missouri, on identifying skeletal remains.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA Chief Meteorologist Norton Strommen on weather & crops; USDA Economist Jim Miller on dairy outlook; Jeri Berc, USDA Soil Conservation Service, on wind erosion; USDA Economist Steve MacDonald on exports; USDA Economist Leland Southard on livestock & poultry.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on farm bill & the environment; DeBoria Janifer takes a look at the WIC program.

Available on Satellite Westar IV, Transponder 12D (Channel 23), audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EST
SATURDAY 10 - 10:45 a.m., EST
MONDAY 8 - 8:45 a.m., EST

OFFMIKE

JAPAN, KOREA & HONG KONG...are on Ron Powers' (WOWO, Fort Wayne, Ind.) itinerary as he joins the Indiana Beef Cattlemen's Association for a 16-day Far East tour beginning Feb. 1. Ron will send special reports to his station about the region's business climate, consumer attitudes, ag related opportunities & the outlook for getting Indiana beef to consumers.

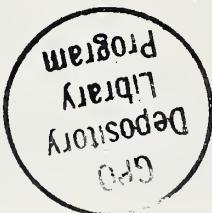
PRODUCERS...are looking forward to the coming season says **Richard Shields** (KKYN Plainview, Texas). In conversation with attendees at the Texas Corn Growers convention and the state Cotton Council he recorded a positive outlook. Richard says cotton producer planting intentions indicate more acreage than last year.

ATTENDANCE...was up at the KWOA Tri-State Farm Show, Jan. 8-9, says **Don Wick** (KWOA, Worthington, Minn.). Exhibitors did a brisk business. Some of the well-attended sessions involved presentations about competition in the livestock industry. Congratulations to Don -- the Minnesota State Cattlemen presented him their 1990 Media Award.

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MOVED...Terry Sullivan from WREX-TV, Rockford, Ill., to WBNS-TV, Columbus, Ohio.

CONGRATULATIONS...Von Ketelsen (KOEL, Oelwein, Iowa) received the first Outstanding Communicator Award from the Iowa Farm Bureau; Mark Sullivan (KIWA, Sheldon, Iowa) promoted to farm director; Dink Embry (WHOP-FM, Hopkinsville, Ky.), who marked 45 years with the station Jan. 20, received the Kentucky Farm Bureau's Distinguished Service Award.

FORMER FARM REPORTER...John Holliman (CNN, Washington, D.C.), and two CNN colleagues transfixed the world with their gripping accounts from the Al-Rashid Hotel in Baghdad Jan. 16 & 17. Holliman, also a former NAFB-member, was AP Radio's first farm reporter & was hired to do ag news for CNN.


VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division